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Materials

Workers' Party of Ireland

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1976

## Ballymurphy News

Republican Club

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# BALLYMURPHY NEWS

Organ of ORR--GRAY Rep. Club  
CLARKE--LARKIN Rep. Club  
CASEMENT Rep. Club  
TRACEY Rep. Club



## *Wilson Resigns: What we say*



On March 2nd of this year I offered my resignation to Bishop Philbin. This resignation was accepted by him in a letter of April 25th.

I resigned with reluctance, because of disagreement with certain policies in the diocese of Down and Connor. There is no question of any disagreement with the Catholic Church. There is no question of my ceasing to be a priest. There is question of disagreement with policies which concern administrative matters, the treatment of people within and outside the Catholic Church, financial policy and the leadership which should be available to people at this time.

While voicing this disagreement I remain a priest. I hope to work in Belfast in some way that will be of value to people. I hope that in the future policies will change and that I may then be allowed to resume the work I have now left.

I wish to express my deep gratitude to many people, including my colleagues in the Protestant and Catholic clergy, who have shown me such kindness and generosity especially during the past few years.

When the Ballymurphy News contacted the Church Authorities and asked if they had anything to say on the matter they replied: His resignation was received and accepted.

The issue of Fr. Wilson's resignation raises a number of questions which the Church Authorities would do well to answer, not only in their own interests but more importantly in the interests of those whom they profess to serve: their parishioners.

1. Does freedom of speech exist within the Church for all its members or are only the self-appointed few allowed this basic freedom? The Church would do well to remember that 14 men and youths gave their lives in Derry three years ago demanding this right for all citizens of Ireland, irrespective of class, creed, colour.

Or is the Church hierarchy the only body which can speak on all matters, not only religious but educational (remember Philbin refused to confirm children whose parents were sending them to a State school), financial (when do you receive a report of the state of finances in your parish), violence (remember the 'letter' Wilson received from his superiors when he alleged that Army chaplains were being used as I.O's) to mention but a very few fields where they are answerable to no one but themselves.

2. Who is the Church? You, or the Bishops? If it is you, what say do you have in who comes or go as your priests, how your schools should be run, what the Church should be doing or not doing in the ghetto areas where it thrives on the poverty of the people...! highest steeple poorest people! what money should be raised for, how it should be raised, how it is spent etc.

How can you protest about any local purely administrative decision without being told that you are in grave sin because you refuse to accept what the priest or bishop has to say on the matter.

Continued on Page 8.

# DISTRICT CENTRE

## Campaign Begins

In a statement this week, the Clarke/Larkin Republican Club, Whiterock, demand that there be no back-tracking on the leisure/district centre for the area.

The statement reads: "Various representations are being made regarding the shelving of plans for leisure centres in different areas due to the alleged necessity for 'severe economic restraint.'"

As usual the working-class people are the hardest hit. The Clarke-Larkin Rep. Club support the general demand that these leisure

centres should be an urgent priority throughout the North but in particular we wish to draw attention to the scrapping of the proposed centre in Ballymurphy, where such an amenity is badly needed, both by the people of the Murphy and adjacent areas like the Whiterock. Over the years, these areas have suffered with high unemployment, bad housing and social amenities. and general over-crowding. Clearly in this situation, the total lack of local amenities are a very serious factor in the over-all problem.

Yet the local administration, having already refused to provide adequate employment in West Belfast, having packed people into this concentration camp area, are now further depriving local people of any hope for the future even in regard to this previously promised leisure centre. The Clarke-Larkin Republican Club demand that there be no back-tracking on this much needed focal point for the community, and therefore call on all interested community groups to support this important demand.

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Upper Springfield Co-Ordinating committee of Republican Clubs, at a special meeting on Sunday 15th June to discuss the Government scrapping of the proposed District Centre for the Whiterock Rd, called for all those bodies and individuals willing to fight for the revocation of the scrapping to join forces and present the broadest possible front to the powers that be.

Only by such unity of purpose and a sinking of personal political viewpoints, could the working-class people hope to have what was theirs by right.

Speaking at the meeting Councillor McDonagh stated that "if the British Government were serious in having "peace" restored, they would have to eliminate those conditions which give rise to violence, but the scrapping of a centre which has been declared by specialists to be absolutely necessary to the people of the area, can only be described as ludicrous.



Mr McDonagh continued, "Why should the few million pounds needed for this project be diverted to the Shipyards when there is no question of cost of maintenance of the British Army here?"

If the money spent alone on cost of Army Helicopters had been spent instead on social improvements, the need for an Army presence would never have arisen.

At the meeting, the clubs proposed to draw up a programme of sustained action to have this decision reversed and will be prepared to join forces with all genuine groups in a serious effort to ensure the rights of the class of no property, prevails, over that of bureaucratic faceless decision-makers whether at Stormont or Westminster."

The people of these areas have been forced to live in housing conditions not much better than some of the nineteenth-century slums of working-class England and this would suggest that the Government are now concerned with the elimination of State violence imposed on people because of their class."

# COME 'N' GRUMBLE

Sunday 29th June in Ballymurphy Community Centre

Everybody welcome.

Organised as an experiment by 123 Community Group, Springhill Avenue.

10.00 a.m. CITIZEN'S SCHOOL...Can citizens run their own school?Here is a group who have done so in Shaws Road.

11.00a.m. THE STATUS OF WOMEN...Do women get their proper place at home,in politics,anywhere?Can they do better?How?

Speaker...Anne Marie Hartigan

12.00noon LOCAL T.V. ...We are now using T.V. locally to discuss local problems.Why not people's television.?

Speaker...Alister Herron.

2.00p.m. HOMES OR ROADS?...A group of citizens tried to stop the Belfast Ring Road.The Ring Road was not built. Did the citizens win-or was there just no money.

Speaker....Brian Smeaton.

3.00p.m. WHY HAVE COURTS?...Why send people to Courts down town? Could citizens deal with crime themselves, with their own local courts?How?

Speaker....Anne O'Neill.

4.00p.m. CITIZENS INDUSTRY...Can citizens run their own industry?Some do.

Speaker....Gerry Finnegan.

5.00p.m. PEOPLE'S THEATRE ... The People's Theatre started in 1972. The people write and act--it is our way of saying things about the way we live. (One of the People's Theatre sketches will be performed.

Speaker...Delia Mc Eneaney.

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## Assassination

The spate of sectarian murders and attempted murders is a further indication of the suicidal mania that certain elements of both sides of the divide which to indulge in, regardless of the consequence of their actions.

It is time that the people, in whose name these madmen would claim to be acting confronted them and

told them to lay off. Not only are the actions dangerous in themselves but they are liable, and probably designed, to bring about a massive bloody confrontation between working class people, where there will be no winners but the Brits. How many more innocent men, women and children must die at their hands

before you stand up and say: Enough is enough. Let us talk about the multitude of common problems that we all face, as working-class people and forget the differences that exist on grounds of religion.

# WHAT WE HAVE

"What we have to offer" is a series of contributions to the Ballymurphy News by the many and varied different community groups in the Greater Ballymurphy area. We may not necessarily agree with the

content of the article and the right to reply is open to you the reader through our letters column.

The second in the series is the Ballymurphy Handicapped Association.

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In August 1970, in St. Bernadette's School, a group of people met to work for the welfare of the handi-capped children of St. John's Parish. This group of about 20 represented parents and interested people in physically and mentally handicapped children.

After this meeting a survey was taken and it was found that 70 handicapped children were registered as the first members.

After an opening social night in St. Bernadette's school an application was made for the Community Centre on the Whiterock Road

for a Sunday club. The Tenants Association kindly agreed to the use of their hall and we have been using this for the past five years.

The first Christmas party in that year brought in 120 children from our own area, St. Paul's and Ardoyne.

In July 1971 the Knockbarra committee gave us the use of their chalet in Rostrevor for 20 children for a week long holiday. Shortly after this holiday, on August 9th. we found it necessary to evacuate 60 children from the violence in the Ballymurphy area for nearly three weeks. 13 helpers looked after these children. Every year since 1971 we have had Christmas parties and holidays without grant aid.

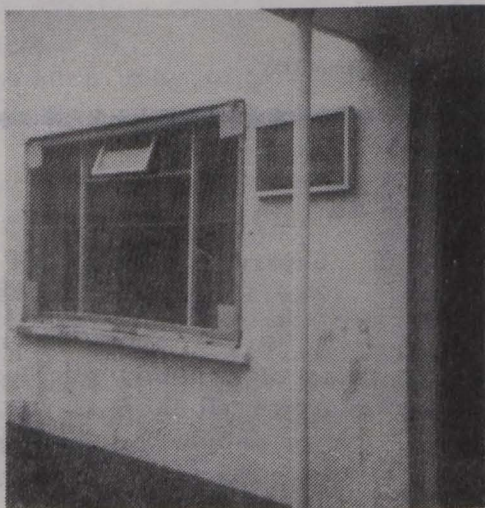


We owe our continuous existence to the generous support of the people of the area and surrounding districts. By donations and collections we have been able to continue our services to the handicapped.

The club now has the use of a house in Glenalina Park, granted to us by the Housing Executive in December 1973. In this club, which is open six nights a week, we have cooking, knitting, art, music, and T.V. THE money to furnish the house came from Germany through M. Margaret Zimmerer.

This year for the first time through the kindness of the committee and patrons of the Divismore Park Social Club, we are sending two children, two parents and a helper to Lourdes. We hope that the experience in Lourdes will give the helper a stronger outlook towards the handi-capped and will benefit the club in future years.

We are also having a holiday for 60 children in Dublin this July over a two week period, taking 30 each week. The eventual aim is to have a centre for handicapped with therapy units, advice centre with all the facilities nec-



# BALLYMURPHY

# HANDI CAPPED

# TO OFFER



essary to improve the educational and social outlook of the people within our care. So far grant aid from the Government has been minimum. We have had the use of the Health Service transport and received 24 chairs but at last the possibility of further help has become likely.

The appreciation of our work over the last five years by all local clubs and associations especially the B.T.A., St. John's, Knockbarra committee, Divismore Park Social Club, Jack Mc Cabe and Social Clubs in Moyard.

We hope that with the help of the people of the area we will continue to provide a practical and useful service. Finally the children, through our help, will be integrated and accepted in the community



# ASSOCIATION

# APOLOGY

We regret any annoyance caused to workers in Moyard over the report in the last issue of the Ballymurphy News, which some people have interpreted as an allegation that these workers were fraternising with the

Brits.

What the statement was trying to point out

was that the Brits, by their actions, were placing the workers in a compromising position...e.g. their continual presence on the site in Moyard.

We regret that the wording of the statement was not carefully checked before publication and would assure the workers that there never was the slightest intention of implying that they were collaborating with the Occupation Forces.

# HOUSING

Councillor Jim Sullivan claimed during the week that the resignation of Mr. Gerry Mc Sheffrey from the Housing Executive places a question mark over the Government's intentions for the future of the North's housing body.

Mr. Mc Sheffrey was recognised as a progressive in housing circles, his resignation comes amid continued speculation concerning further reorganisation of the Housing Executive.

At the present the Director General of the Housing Executive, Mr. Spence, has authorised a feasibility study into sub-dividing the Executive into a number of regional teams.

This study envisages the combination of management, maintenance and development functions in a number of welldefined regional areas.

As a public representative living in an area affected by redevelopment I can say without fear of contradiction that Gerry Mc Sheffrey's

approach was both enlightened and refreshing when we consider the bureaucratic approaches to housing that are unfortunately still prevalent among some of the housing chiefs in the Six Counties.

# TRANSPORT POLICY

The County Antrim Exec. of Republican Clubs have submitted their plans on Transportation to the City Hall.

The following is the text of the statement issued with the plans:

In putting forward our policy concepts on Transportation Policy the Republican Movement is not claiming to be advocating a new unique solution. It is only to show that there are other solutions which do not cause the terrible destruction and social effects which the current Roads Proposals have already caused and will continue to cause in this city. The Republican Clubs believe that a public transport policy can achieve the following: A more socially just transport solution;

A safer transport system which can deal with the problems of handicapped people;

The prevention of wholesale community destruction; The reuse of inner city areas for working class housing and community facilities and not for cars;

Based on these advantages we list the following short term demands:

1. The return of all housing land cleared for the Ring Road to the redevelopment land bank particularly in West Belfast.

2. A special housing drive to rebuild new model urban housing schemes on this land along with a co-ordinated effort to restore, where possible, housing areas suffering from blight because of the Ring Road clearances.

3. The completion of the Outer Ring Road, the Cross River York Street--Sydenham Bypass connection and the Moira/Templepatrick

connection must be brought forward in the Roads programme.

4. The creation of a Belfast District Transport Advisory Board, consisting of representatives of the City Council, Tenants Associations and Trade Unions to determine the development of Public Transport Strategy and to improve the existing Transport services.

5. The immediate improvement and development of public transport services including the full and speedy implementation of the Kinsey Study recommendations on rail services.

6. The immediate introduction of bus and cycle lanes on all possible major routes in the city with immediate extension of bus route only roads in a number of pilot schemes in cross city transport.

7. The scrapping of all city bus fares especially the inequitable bus token system which penalises workers like shoppers living on far out housing estates like Twinbrook, Glengormley, Andersonstown and Dundonald.

8. Extra disturbance compensation similar to that already available to business interests (for loss of business due to relocation) to be provided to those families who were forced to leave their homes because of the Roads Plans.

9. A new programme of multi-storey free public car parks to be constructed near the city centre and in rings  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile and  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles from the city centre. This proposal to accompany the restriction of private traffic in the centre and the provision of 'park and ride' facilities as outlined previously.

10. The preparation of a new locally prepared transport plan for the city to cover transportation up to 1976 with a minimum investment level of £150 million. This plan to incorporate the other suggestions outlined, based on the social needs of the people. The plan should prevent: (a) The destruction of any existing working class community, homes, jobs, etc. (b) The physical separation of adjoining communities or parts of communities; (c) The harmful environmental effects of noise, pollution and destruction of parts of the city with special architectural or historic character.

With regard to the Consultants Review we feel it is a superficial document biased heavily against Public Transport and against the general interest of the working people of Belfast.

It represents the same remote remote and spurious method of analysis as that which


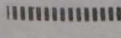

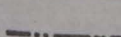



dominated the original Travers Morgan solution. The alternatives offered to the high standard bus service which is the transport norm in most large cities is a Ring Road on the cheap which will more resemble a big dipper than an urban traffic solution and the creation of a great western railway along the route of the West leg of the proposed motorway.

Such facile solutions are an insult to the citizens of Belfast who have seen vast areas of their city blitzed and other areas run down and blighted over the last ten years. The small amount of traffic going through Belfast to the docks in no way justifies the major recommendations in Strategies.

# Public Transport

# Policy 2 Central Area



-  MOTORWAY
-  RAILWAYS
-  LOOPED ROADS
-  NORTH SOUTH BUS LOOP
-  EAST WEST BUS LOOP
-  FREE CAR PARKS
-  RAIL STATION

The politicians like Craig, Paisley and Bradford who got us into this mess should be asked to pay the consultants fees, not the ratepayers of Belfast or the taxpayer.

In putting forward these demands the Republican Clubs are interested only

in protecting the working class communities of Belfast. The Republican Clubs call therefore for the maximum unity of all working people and their organizations to achieve a modern efficient public transport system and to reject the big business interests who are behind the outdated, half baked roads solutions.



# What we say

3. Locally, there has been considerable disquiet since the arrival of Canon Murphy on the scene...he has come and the Indian runs have gone, Sean Mc Keown has gone, and now Des Wilson has gone.

Just a co-incidence or was he sent in to re-establish the Church as an authoritarian dictatorship and to hell with those that resisted that move?

4. Why was rumour allowed to abound on the Wilson case before he had to stand up himself and clear the air.

5. Why has the Church nothing to say in reply?

Would it be because there are no answers, because what Des Wilson has to say is the truth, which in the end will win through in the end. If they have nothing to hide, why don't they speak out now.

There are a great number of people who want to know what is going on in their parish, behind the closed doors of 446 Falls Road and on the Somerton Road: they have a right to know: they after all are the people who are the Church and sooner or later they will know.

Civil Rights does not end when you cross the door of the Church.

## Letters to the Editor

### Festival

The following is the text of a letter sent to over 70 different community groups in the Upper Springfield area by the Festival Committee.

A chara,

The Upper Springfield Festival Week Committee for 1975-'76 have been in session for the past two months. The Festival week is planned for 10th.-17th. August.

We feel at the moment that we are in no way representative of all the various community groups in the area. This situation has arisen due to a lack of communications, mainly on our side, as a result of misunderstanding between the 1974--'75 committee and ourselves.

Consequently, the purpose of the Festival, which is to highlight the many different social and recreational activities which take place in the area regularly, is not being fulfilled.

We are operating in a blind alley in many cases and we do not want to impose on any body or activity already functioning.

Without the interest and involvement of all community groups we believe that the Festival is doomed to failure.

We hope that all groups would make their own contribution in whatever way they feel they can, and so ensure the success of the Festival.

The Festival office is in the C.A.B's office (Old Doctor's surgery, Bullring, Ballymurphy) and is open every Monday night at 8.00p.m.

We would ask you to send a representative along to the next meeting and we look forward to seeing you all there.

Is mise,

Colette Fisher, Secretary,

## Bonny Babies ?

A chara,

I was rather worried to see that one of the events in the Festival is a 'Bonny Baby' contest. Although, like any beauty contest, these are just harmless fun, they do have sinister implications in that even these days, a 'bonny baby' equals a fat baby! Seriously, too many mothers encourage their babies to take over-rich milks and starchy rusks etc. at too early an age, thus causing not necessarily fatness in later life but a habitually unbalanced diet.

Wouldn't it be better to get a health visitor or nurse to pick the healthiest baby and then then say why?

(I don't mean that seriously but on reflection perhaps it is not a bad idea!)

Health and nutrition education is an important today, as it ever was...perhaps this is a field where the Republican Clubs could contribute?

Is mise,

Mrs. N. Collins. 31, Colinview Street,  
(mother of a very bonny baby) Bt12 7EQ.

Editor's note:

Mrs. Collins' letter has been passed on to the Festival committee for their deliberations.